steps of:

receiving an information element and at least an input symbol;

normalizing the input symbol to generate a normalized symbol formatted according to a predetermined structure;

searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and linked parent identifier; and

storing at least the parent identifier and the information element so that the parent identifier is linked to the information element.

25. (Amended) A method for the retrieval of symbolically linked information, comprising the steps of:

receiving an input symbol;

normalizing the input symbol to generate a normalized symbol formatted according to a predetermined structure;

searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and a parent identifier linked to the master symbol;

searching an information element database to find an information element linked with the parent identifier; and

retrieving the information element linked to the parent identifier.

37. (Amended) A document repository system allowing electronic archival of documents using an input symbol comprising:

a storage device;

a network interface;

a processor coupled to the storage device, said processor adapted to:

store a database of master symbols, wherein each master symbol is linked to a parent identifier and a document database;

receive an input symbol and a document via the network interface,

normalize the input symbol to obtain a normalized input symbol formatted according to a predetermined structure,

search the master symbol database using the normalized input symbol to find a matching master symbol and a linked parent identifier,

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store the document in the document database so that the document is linked to the parent identifier.

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39. (Amended) A document repository system allowing electronic retrieval of documents using an input symbol, comprising:

a storage device storing a master symbol database and a document database, the master symbol database storing master symbols, wherein each master symbol is linked to a parent identifier, and the document database storing documents linked to a parent identifier;

a network interface;

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a processor, which:

receives an input symbol via the network interface,

normalizes the input symbol to obtain a normalized input symbol formatted according to a predetermined structure,

searches the symbol database using the normalized input symbol to find a matching master symbol and a linked parent identifier, and

retrieves documents from the document database that are linked to the parent identifier.

41. (Amended) A method for storing and referencing symbolically linked information in an environment wherein a plurality of different symbols are conventionally utilized to refer to a single entity, comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of input symbols, each pertaining to a same single entity;

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for each of the plurality of input symbols, generating a normalized master symbol formatted according to a predetermined structure;

determining a unique parent symbol corresponding to the master symbols;

storing the parent symbol and the plurality of master symbols in a master symbol database wherein each of the plurality of normalized master symbols is linked to the parent symbol.

42. (Amended) A document repository system allowing electronic retrieval of documents related to a plurality of entities, each of the entities conventionally referred to utilizing a plurality of different symbols comprising:

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a processor, wherein the processor is adapted to:

receive a plurality of input symbols, each pertaining to a same single entity;

for each of the plurality of input symbols, generate a normalized master symbol

formatted according to a predetermined structure;

determine a unique parent symbol corresponding to the master symbols;

store the parent symbol and the plurality of master symbols in a master symbol database

wherein each of the plurality of normalized master symbols is linked to the parent symbol.

Please <u>add</u> the following claims:

43. (New) A method for the archival of symbolically linked information, comprising:

receiving an information element and at least an input symbol;

normalizing the input symbol, based on a historical pattern of a contributor of the

information element, to generate a normalized symbol;

searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching

master symbol and linked parent identifier; and

storing at least the parent identifier and the information element so that the parent

identifier is linked to the information element.

44. (New) A method for the archival of symbolically linked information, comprising:

receiving an information element and at least an input symbol;

normalizing the input symbol, based on a preference of a contributor of the

information element, to generate a normalized symbol;

searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching

master symbol and linked parent identifier; and

storing at least the parent identifier and the information element so that the parent

identifier is linked to the information element.

45. (New) A method for the retrieval of symbolically linked information, comprising:

receiving an input symbol;

normalizing the input symbol, based on a historical pattern of a submitter of the input

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symbol, to generate a normalized symbol;

       searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and a parent identifier linked to the master symbol;

       searching an information element database to find an information element linked with the parent identifier; and

       retrieving the information element linked to the parent identifier.

46. (New) A method for the archival of symbolically linked information, comprising:

       receiving an information element and at least an input symbol;

       normalizing the input symbol, based on an identification of a contributor of the information element, to generate a normalized symbol;

       searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and linked parent identifier; and

       storing at least the parent identifier and the information element so that the parent identifier is linked to the information element.

47. (New) A method for the retrieval of symbolically linked information, comprising:

       receiving an input symbol;

       normalizing the input symbol, based on an identification of a submitter of the input symbol, to generate a normalized symbol;

       searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and a parent identifier linked to the master symbol;

       searching an information element database to find an information element linked with the parent identifier; and

       retrieving the information element linked to the parent identifier.

48. (New) A method for the retrieval of symbolically linked information, comprising:

       receiving an input symbol;

       normalizing the input symbol, based on a preference of a submitter of the input symbol, to generate a normalized symbol;

       searching a master symbol database using the normalized symbol to find a matching master symbol and a parent identifier linked to the master symbol;